



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Central Montana Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Central Consortium (CMICC) met in Lewistown on Wed., Aug. 13. Project Director Cheri Kilby opened the meeting by having Dorothy Gremaux, Central Montana Dispatch Center 9-1-1 Coordinator, give a report on the last IM Technical Committee meeting.

Vince Kolar, Cascade County DES Coordinator, reported on the last IM Project Director's meeting, and highlighted information regarding the CMS contract and the Executive Director hiring process. Vince also indicated that Great Falls will be able to host a fleet mapping work session the week of Sept. 22, since Motorola personnel are next available that week. Because the fleet mapping sub-committee has not had a chance to meet since June, it was suggested that alternate dates be proposed and IM members be polled to determine their availability to participate Sept. 22.

Dorothy reported that the Judith Peak and South Moccasin sites in Fergus County are just about fully functional. Microwave installation for both sites is scheduled to begin on Aug. 26. She said that generators at the site have had to be used twice, and they performed as designed. An invasion of flies occurred at the South Moccasin site when an access hole made by a non-IM user was not properly sealed. Kudos go to Dave Green, Montana Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) for doing the clean-up work at the site. Kevin Bruski, MDOT is soliciting quotes for a non-trunked combiner for the Judith Peak site.

Pondera County DES Coordinator Leanne Hermance provided an update on the Broken Pick site. On July 25, a meeting took place with county commissioners and a development plan adopted. The NEPA for the site has just been approved.

Members discussed placing an equipment diagram inside each shelter so that equipment is installed in correct locations. They also discussed having the IM Technical Committee address the use of motion lights or timers at sites to avoid excess energy use when lights are accidentally left on.

Cheri is working on the lease agreement amendments that the U.S. Air Force (USAF) has requested. The USAF is still working to determine how equipment will be transferred to local jurisdictions. The COPS subscriber units should be ordered soon, and equipment is expected to be delivered this fall.

Corky Grove, Great Falls Police Chief, reported on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) consortium, which is in the process of obtaining 700 MHz frequencies. The Cascade County/Great Falls region was selected as the pilot area for development of the 700 MHz wideband mobile data test site, which should be in operation a year from now.

The next CMICC meeting will be held at 10:00 am on

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Wed., Sept. 10 at a Great Falls location that offers teleconferencing, possibly the Courthouse Annex. The location will be confirmed at a later date.

Montana Chapter APCO Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Montana's Chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) met in Lewistown on Thurs., August 14. The meeting began with Standing Committee reports. Under the Training and Standards Committee report, members learned that Kimberly Burdick, Montana APCO Executive Council Representative, is teaching a semester-long course at the Montana State University's Great Falls College of Technology beginning Sept. 2. This pilot course is part of the Public Safety Communications professional certification program to prepare individuals for the public safety dispatcher profession.

Kimberly told members about the APCO Expectations Evaluation Software, which is a useful tool for conducting personnel evaluations, especially for new trainees. Susan Bomstad, Montana Chapter APCO President, noted that she and Kimberly attended the Law Enforcement Summit in Billings last month and watched an "Amber Alert" video that provides an excellent overview of the program, and would serve as a useful training tool. "Reverse 9-1-1" procedures is another potential training area.

The next Standing Committee report came from Susan for the Legislative Committee regarding efforts to permit a 20-year retirement for Public Safety Telecommunicators. She and Kimberly have presented the proposal to the Public Employee Retirement Board, and the organization stated that it does not oppose the proposal. The proposal also was presented at five regional Montana Association of Counties (MACo) meetings earlier this year as well as at the Law Enforcement Summit. The State Administration and Veteran's Affairs Interim Committee is in the process of drafting the bill.

Kimberly reported on the APCO Executive Council meeting in Kansas City and indicated that the Call Center Standards Committee had a very busy and productive year. She encouraged members to consider enrollment in the APCO Institute's Registered Public Safety Leader year-long training program. In addition, Kimberly announced that APCO 1st Vice President, Richard Mirgon, will be the keynote speaker at Montana's Chapter APCO conference Oct. 22-23 in Billings. An Active Shooter training program is scheduled for two 1-day sessions on Oct. 21 and 22. Logistics of the APCO Public Safety awards also were discussed.

During the Chapter meeting, minutes of the last meeting were amended and approved as well as the Treasurer's report. Monica Ness, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), reported on a negotiated rulemaking

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committee that is being formed to establish proposed rules and guidelines for how emergency telephone fees will be collected by prepaid wireless telecommunications providers. The Chapter endorsed Kimberly Burdick to represent APCO and Dorothy Gremaux to represent Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) on the committee.

The next Chapter APCO meeting will be Oct 22 or 23 in conjunction with the Montana Chapter APCO conference.

IM Frequency Sub-Committee Meeting

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana (IM) Frequency Sub-Committee met on Tues., Aug. 12 to review the status of IM frequency search and licensing efforts and to discuss significant issues regarding the use and management of mutual aid and common frequencies. Significant issues discussed included interference being experienced on mutual aid frequencies (especially near the Canadian border), inappropriate frequency use, narrow banding, analog vs. digital use, and encryption use requests.

The committee recommended that all mutual aid traffic remain analog and that January 1, 2011 be established as a date by which mutual aid use will be narrow banded. This date will give agencies time to plan and seek financial assistance to transition from older, wide-band only radios. Also suggested was the use of tone controls on the transmit side for mutual aid channels to mitigate certain interference issues. Jack Spillman and Flathead County will follow up on this suggestion with various trials on the Silver channel (156.7 Hz), which is especially problematic.

The group also recommended that digital, encrypted use of mutual aid frequencies only be allowed for sensitive information (HIPA- or criminal-case-sensitive information and responder safety) on the Black, White and Tan channels, and potentially on the Maroon and Silver channels under certain circumstances. Strict policies and MOUs for this use need to be established. PSSB and the Frequency Sub-Committee plan to hold a frequency forum as part of the Montana APCO convention on Oct. 21 in Billings. All of these issues will be discussed during that forum.

Dave McGinnis, Missoula County Sheriff's Department, led an in-depth discussion on the use of conventional interop channels on the IM radio system. Members agreed that national VTAC channels used for nationwide interoperability should be incorporated into the IM strategy. The plan calls for two channels to be licensed at sites around the state; they will utilize tone control schemes in line with MDoT and Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) plans. This proposal enables the State of Montana and IM Project to be consistent with national plans and provides analog narrowband channels

at each site that are known and easy to implement. Sub-Committee Chair Scott Bradford was asked to prepare and distribute the proposed plan for comment.

Scott reviewed frequency search and licensing efforts being conducted for the IM Project, which involve 19 radio sites. Ray Hetherington, Wheatland County Sheriff's Office, and Dale Osborne, MHP, continue to track remaining Letters of Concurrence (LOCs) from the previous Northern Tier search. Scott also presented a draft plan for use of the State's marine channels, which will be incorporated into the overall statewide trunking plan. This plan will be coordinated with the FCC during the next coordination effort, which will address frequency needs in the Billings/Yellowstone County region.

The next Frequency Sub-Committee meeting will be in October in conjunction with the Montana APCO conference.

Upcoming Meetings

August 20 – NOTE: Meeting Cancelled

Eastern Tier Consortium (ETIC), Glendive

August 21

I-15/90 Corridor Consortium

Butte • 10:00 am

Chamber of Commerce; 1000 George St.

August 25

Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium

Bozeman • 10:00 am • City Center Motel, 507 W. Main St.

August 25

IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am • State Capitol • Room 172

August 26

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Roundup • 10:00 am • Location to be Announced

August 27

Tri-County Consortium

Helena • 10:00 am

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

Sept. 8

IM Finance Committee

Helena • 9:00 am - Noon

Anderson & ZurMuehlen • 828 Great Northern Blvd.

Sept. 8

IM Governance Committee

Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm

DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

Sept. 9

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

State Capitol • Room 152

Sept. 11

Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC)

Helena • 10:00 am • Rm. 152 State Capitol

Sept. 11

Northern Tier (NTIP)

Teleconference • 9:00 am